

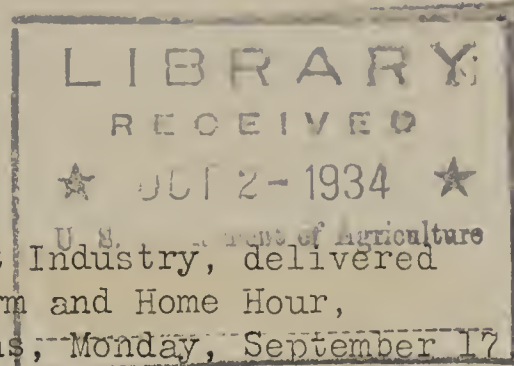
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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast over a network of 50 associated NBC radio stations, Monday, September 17, 1934.



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Hello Folks: Last Thursday in my Garden Calendar talk, I gave you a few suggestions about the fall care of the lawn and shrubbery plantings around your homes. I also mentioned the planting of bulbs and peonies.

Today, I want to call your attention to two or three problems that home owners are being confronted with in connection with the care of their ornamental plants. All through the eastern part of the United States, and especially in Virginia, there are some wonderful boxwoods. One writer has characterized this splendid ornamental plant as the aristocrat of all ornamental plantings. I think that I fully agree with him for many of these wonderful plants that are found on the old Virginia estates have survived the vicissitudes of at least two wars and the passage of sometimes 200 years, but even boxwoods finally show the effects of old age and the ravages of insects and diseases and the past 2 or 3 years have witnessed a considerable mortality among the fine old boxwoods of the eastern part of the country.

Dr. Freeman Weiss, the Pathologist of our Office, who works on the diseases of ornamental plants tells me that about one out of three plant specimens we receive for examination is a boxwood.

The drought periods of the past 3 or 4 years have been extremely hard on these plants, and Dr. Weiss tells me that it is the younger generation of boxwood plants that are suffering most. He suggests that perhaps after all the first hundred years of the life of a boxwood are the hardest and if they survive infancy and adolescence they may experience a vigorous old age. Nevertheless Dr. Weiss says there are a lot of boxwoods in the country today that are suffering from one ailment or another. While boxwoods may have suffered more or less from preventable diseases, they also have insect troubles, for example, the boxwood leaf miner which tunnels through the tissues of the leaves during the early spring, does a lot of damage, but can be controlled by a special spray which contains molasses as a sticker. The real trouble, however, in most cases is neglect or improper plantings. In many cases the boxwoods have been planted too deep and the roots have been smothered or starved, and as I have already suggested a great many boxwoods have died the past 3 or 4 years from the lack of moisture.

I want to suggest to you folks who live in sections where boxwoods will grow that while the boxwood plants do live to a great age they are not really difficult to grow, and they make nice small plants in a very few years. The beauty about the boxwood as an ornamental plant is that it can be grown in such a symmetrical shape, in fact, the plants can be clipped and trimmed in way you want them. The smaller plants are fine for bordering garden walks and along perennial borders. I wouldn't advise using them very often where they will be

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shaded or crowded by trees or shrubbery. Some of the finest boxwoods that I have ever seen have stood right out in the open where they can get full sunshine.

If any of you folks who are interested in boxwoods and have problems in connection with their growth will write me a letter stating your problems I will turn it over to Dr. Weiss or to the folks in the Bureau of Entomology and get you the latest information on how to treat these splendid plants for the control of diseases and insects.

I have had no trouble rooting plants of the boxwood, and I don't know of any ornamental that is more pleasing or satisfactory to grow, however, I am very partial to the Abelia which is a semi-evergreen shrub holding its bright shiny leaves until long after the first heavy frost. The abelia ordinarily grows to a height of 3 or 4 feet and it can be trimmed and kept in a compact form if you desire to have it grow that way. The nice thing about abelia is that it begins to bloom early in the summer and continues to bloom until after frost. It has a beautiful little rose pink blossom and the blossoms come in clusters so that the plants are very handsome. There are some most excellent plants growing in the United States Capitol grounds. Last winter when the temperature went extremely low many of the abelias were killed or at least partly killed, but where the dead wood was pruned off the plants have made a new growth and the plants are now in full bloom. The Grandiflora is the species most commonly grown as an ornamental and it is said to be hardy as far north as Philadelphia or sometimes Massachusetts, but as I have suggested if it is partly killed back a new growth will soon form. If the abelias are planted in a location where they will be sheltered from the north winds they will stand a fairly low temperature without any great injury.

Another plant I want to mention is the old-fashioned lilac. We get a lot of questions about why lilacs do not bloom, also what causes the white coating on the leaves of lilacs. The white coating is a mildew. Lilacs should be planted where they will get full sunshine and free circulation of air. They will not endure a sour soil and the addition of a little lime to the soil in which they are growing will sometimes make them bloom. To my mind there is nothing finer than a group of old-fashioned lilacs either in the white or the purple, but I think I prefer the purple.

You southern folks all know the Crepe Myrtle which is often spoken of as the southern lilac, although it is no relation to the lilac.

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